TOWN
&
COUNTRY
CHURCH

In This Issue

Austin Armitstead, who has contributed e article on "Stewardship of Time"—age 1—is minister of the Methodist Church Center Moriches, Long Island, N.Y.

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Arthur C. Churchill, Congregational inistry to Agricultural Labor, Memphis, enn., describes the changes in old patterns hich may bring about "The Kingdom of od in the South"—Page 5.

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People who are fortunate enough to live the country have "an obligation to know e Bible better," writes William L. Rogers his article, "The Country and God," on age 13. Mr. Rogers is a former Methodist inister now living on a dairy farm at illsdale, N.Y.

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No. 104
February, 1955

Stewardship of Time

AUSTIN H. ARMITSTEAD

HOLBROOK LIBRARY PACIFIC SCHOOL OF RELIGION

• "I don't have the time, pastor. I'd like to but. . . ." How often we have heard this excuse! If your church is like many others across the country you are troubled by the small amount of time some people spend at church functions and the huge amount of time others spend, because "no one else will do the job." Only a few people carry the load and the rest let them do it.

As ministers, we spend a great deal of thought on "stewardship." Unfortunately, many people think of this as related to money only. I believe that the weak link in many churches is that we have not talked enough about "stewardship of time."

There are 168 hours in each week, yet many people do not take time for their own spiritual growth or for service to the churches to which they belong. Even a suggestion to attend the Sunday morning church service brings the excuse, "Sunday's the only day that John has to work around the house"; or "Sunday's the only day when we can sleep late." If we get over thirty-three per cent of our people out to church on a given Sunday we are happy and think that things are "looking up." I cannot believe that Christianity will mean much to people unless they spend some time working at it.

Broadening the Base of Operations

Now, the committee on nominations of our church started to work on this problem two years ago. They decided that no one person should hold more than three important jobs in the church and that, in most cases, one is sufficient. (One man said he had eighteen jobs in the church five years ago.)

We started to change this procedure. Letters were sent out to persons who had been selected for certain jobs, and interviews were made for others. After one year (as a result of this and other efforts on the part of the official board and organizations) nearly forty per cent of the members of the church were working on committees, organizations, and specific functions of the church other than the Sunday morning service and church school. As the organizations and functions grew we found that some of the "inactives" began to come to the service on Sunday morning, as well.

Roll Call

However, I did not think we had done enough. We decided to have a "roll call Sunday," when the names of the members would be called and they would be expected to answer "present" or notify us ahead of time. As might be expected, there was a decided increase in attendance on this day. As the people came into the church they found a long legal-size paper inserted in the church bulletin and they were given a pencil. The sight of the paper was enough to frighten them but, upon inspection, they found they had nothing to do except insert check marks.

The sermon was on "stewardship of time," and I suggested that since there were 168 hours in the week, and naturally we all want to do things that will help us with the spiritual side of our lives, we would like each person to give a minimum of one extra hour in the week to the work of the church.

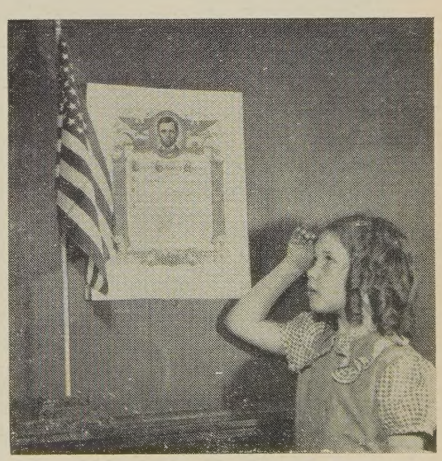


Photo by Eva Luoma

There were enough suggestions on the list to include everyone—old and young, rich and poor, able and disabled. Some of the suggestions on the check list included visiting shut-ins; choir; working with youth groups; assisting in the church nursery; greeting people at the door of the church on Sunday mornings; working on the church newspaper; serving on the telephone committee, inviting people to attend church services; assisting to form a youth choir; serving as a member of the official board; participating in youth fellowship; serving on committees and commissions; visiting inactive members; working as a teacher or assistant teacher in the church school; acting as usher; using car to bring folks to church; providing flowers for the church on occasions; folding church bulletins; serving as evangelistic visitor; helping with typewriting and record keeping; keeping a record of the church's history, including the collection of newspaper clippings; singing in a high school choir; serving as host or hostess at family night programs; playing the piano. There was space for other suggestions, too.

The Outcome

Frankly, I was surprised with the results. Nearly everyone signed the questionnaire and checked the places where they were willing to serve. At present we are in the throes of implementation and it is a big job. For example, we have eleven people to fold church bulletins, nine to visit shut-ins, ten to provide flowers—and so on.

But here is a concrete example of the increase in participation. "Family Night" is held the first Sunday of each month. It used to be like "pulling teeth" to get hostesses and the result was that six persons had to be responsible for eight "family night" programs. This year, as a result of the questionnaire, we have more than twenty-four persons lined up, and there will be more as people receive the questionnaires which will be left at their homes.

Ministers and lay people do not always challenge people in the right way—some people are overworked and others have too little to do. I believe we can spread the work of our churches so that many more members will participate. If we are willing to broaden the base of our operations, ministers will have time for important work, lay people who are now doing a dozen jobs will find they can do two or three more effectively, and new workers will be able to share in the tasks and Christian fellowship of the churches—in your communities, as well as mine.

Federated Church Conference

• Over sixty laymen, pastors, denominational and council leaders convened for a one-day Federated Church Conference at Senett, N. Y. last October. The conference was cosponsored by the Church Planning and Adjustment Committee of the New York State Council of Churches and The Rural Church Institute.

The greater portion of the day was given over to a consideration of three major activities which present peculiar problems for federated churches, namely: 1) Property and Finance Problems; 2) Program Problems and Denominational Relationships; and 3) Problems related to Worship and Sacramental Procedures.

The use, maintenance and holding of properties has proved to be one of the stumbling blocks in federated church experience, according to many of the delegates. Among suggested solutions of the property problem, it was recommended that the existing church building be used or disposed of, according to the needs of the total program. It was further suggested that when property is to be disposed of, it should not fall into the hands of secular or sectarian groups whose purposes are contrary to Christian ethics and principles. If, however, it has been decided to sell the property for secular use, it was suggested that distinctive religious marks, such as a steeple or stained glass windows, be removed.

One of the knottiest problems of federated churches is the reporting of statistics. It was assumed that church membership, Sunday school enrollment and financial receipts are usually reported to denominational bodies on the basis of local denominational records, rather than the combined records of the federation. It was pointed out, however, that strictly denominational reporting of a unit group in a federated church does not indicate the full strength of the local federated church. To improve this situation, it was urged that denominations include a special section for federated church statistics in their annual reports. This would list membership, pastors, benevolences and total financial strength, both by denominational units and for the federation as a whole.

In the use of program materials, federations were urged to enlarge their appreciation of the denominations and to develop fellowship across denominational lines. Program materials should be selected on the basis of their value to the particular federation.

It was recommended that interdenominational church membership materials be prepared or recommended for use in federated church membership classes.

—Reported by G. Shubert Fryr

Volunteers are Needed

• The National Association for Mental Health, 1790 Broadway, New York 19, N. Y., announces the publication of a new recruiting aid for mental hospital volunteers entitled "Wanted—Your Magic."

Because the hospital volunteer has a most valuable contribution to make to the recovery of mental patients and because volunteers are needed, the National Association for Mental Health hopes that the pamphlet will be widely circulated. It is designed for distribution both by organizations which have a hospital volunteer program and by other clubs and groups that can help in the recruitment of mental hospital volunteers by offering the pamphlet to their membership.

Space has been provided on the pamphlet for an imprint of the sponsoring organization's name and address. The cost is 10 cents for single copies; $7.50 for one hundred copies.

Henry Wallace, Country Minister

BENSON Y. LANDIS

As Recorded in "Uncle Henry's Own Story"

Henry Wallace (1836-1916) was both a city minister and a country minister before he became an editor and an agricultural statesman, one of the truly great figures of the Middle West. He has put into print a record of his experience as the pastor of the United Presbyterian Church at Morning Sun, Iowa, in Volume II of a fascinating account of three volumes, *Uncle Henry's Own Story*, published in book form by WALLACES FARMER, Des Moines, 1917, 1918, 1919, after the various sections had appeared in the periodical.

The books consist of numerous letters written by "Uncle Henry" (the first of the noted Iowa family) to his great grandchildren, the first of whom arrived in 1915. In the course of my historical reading I reread the first volume, which I had had for a long time, and borrowed volumes II and III from WALLACES FARMER AND IOWA HOMESTEAD. I noted that these volumes had inside them the signature of my friend, Henry A. Wallace, who became Secretary of Agriculture and Vice President of the United States, and who is one of Uncle Henry's grandsons.

The man who was to see his name become a household word in Iowa and the Middle West was born in Western Pennsylvania, of parents who came from Ulster in 1832. The home farm was named "Spring Mount," and there people ate well. There was "elegant cream from the spring house." There was always "first-class bread," home-baked, of course, not the kind marketed in Des Moines in 1915, and not the kind usually marketed today. Uncle Henry went to an old-fashioned, one-room school. He records with glee his memory of "the new barn."

Uncle Henry went to Jefferson College, now Washington and Jefferson, and in due course to two United Presbyterian seminaries, to prepare for the ministry. While at Pittsburgh in his student days, he chanced to see a tall man pass through Pittsburgh with the saddest eyes and the saddest face in all the world, named Abraham Lincoln.

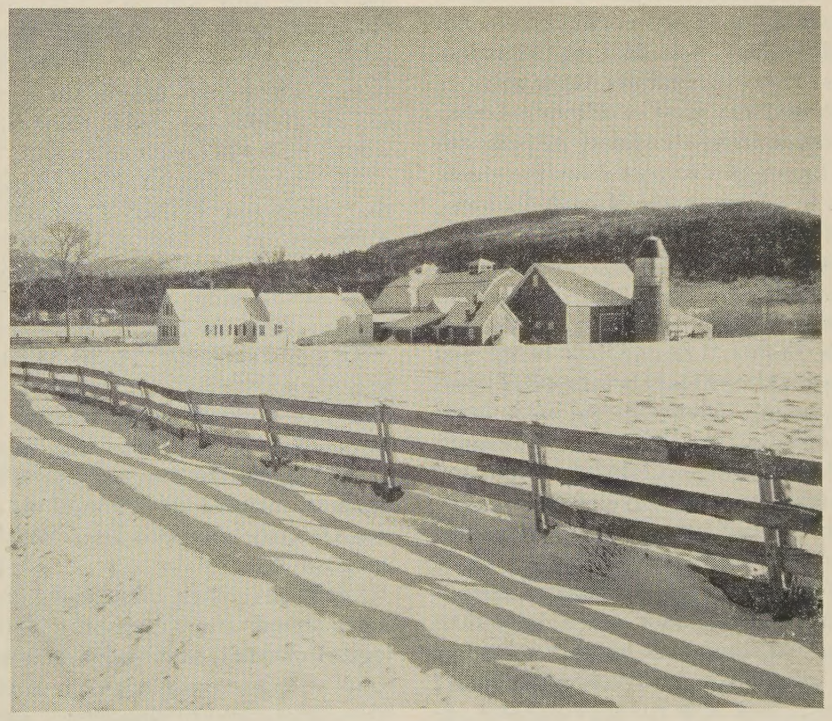
Uncle Henry was licensed by the Presbytery of Monmouth, Ill., in April 1862, and was soon appointed to be in charge of the mission at Rock Island and Davenport, but also served for a few months as pastor of the country charges of Albia and Service, in Iowa, prior to going to the city pulpit. He was asked during the Civil War to serve the troops under the Christian Commission, a sort of forerunner of the Y.M.C.A. in the armed services. He was with the troops around Richmond, and there again saw an ungainly man on horseback, the most curious rider ever—Abraham Lincoln.

While Uncle Henry was at Rock Island-Davenport, President Lincoln called on the people to fast on May 30, 1865. (Modern churchmen who are interested in calling days of prayer may wish to note.) The older ministers called a union meeting on that day and designated Henry Wallace, the youngest preacher, to preach the sermon that day. He spoke in the Baptist church, and had a large interdenominational audience. He made up his mind that if he was to preach a sermon on a fast day he would "go the whole length," and he chose for his text: "Is not this the fast that I have chosen; to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bonds of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke . . . and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?"

The Methodists and Baptists responded with loud Amens, and the New York journal, THE INDEPENDENT, printed it later. Uncle Henry received letters from prominent people all over the country. He had even urged that fasting be local as well as national, and that it was high time for all to repent. Prominent local residents winced, Uncle Henry noted from the pulpit.

Wendell Phillips came to lecture.

(Continued on Page 4)



Winston Pote from A. Devaney, N. Y.

(*Continued from Page 3*)

There were temperance campaigns. Uncle Henry, with his usual long look, threw himself into the campaign for a local public library. He became secretary of the first voluntary library association of Rock Island.

In time, Uncle Henry found it difficult to serve two city churches well. His health was also not of the best. He thought it best to accept his father's advice, take a country church, and live out of doors as much as possible. He was called to the pastorate of Morning Sun.

The country church was located some twenty miles from Burlington, Iowa, and was made up largely of farmers who had come from Morning Sun, Ohio. There were family feuds, which had actually originated in Ohio. But in those days "they all went to church," and the preacher never lacked a congregation. The building was well lighted, poorly heated, and was defective in accoustics.

In the 1870's, when a well-known farmer failed to attend church, he could be summoned for non-attendance. One such was summoned, but still refused to attend. It took diplomacy and high courage, at times, for the minister to persuade some to return.

"Life was not dull at Morning Sun. My congregation increased . . . I revived the most excellent custom, in vogue in my boyhood, of pastoral visitation, not to pass away the time, but to ascertain the spiritual condition of the membership.

"I divided the congregation into Elders' districts, and once a year, in company with an elder, I visited each family, announcing from the pulpit the Sabbath before what families would be visited that week, and where we would stop for dinner, without asking whether it would be convenient or not. We were satisfied with pot luck, knowing there would always be something in the pot."

The pastor kept a memorandum book, with his own system of shorthand. "I think this family visitation was about the most effective work that I ever did in the ministry. I once visited a member who had ceased to come to church, although his family still attended. He was a man who evidently required a great deal of grace to do him much good, but on the whole he was an excellent citizen. I took dinner at his house purposely that day. . . ." In the end there was a fruitful conversation between pastor and member, and the member again participated.

"I talked to these people freely about their farms and farming, sat at their feet, so to speak, and learned enough farming to ask them intelligent questions. They evidently came to the conclusion that if I was so interested in their material interests, I might have something profitable to say to them concerning spiritual things. Here I got my first idea that if a man wants to preach effectively to country people, he must do so in terms of farm life. . . . They were a wonderfully friendly people.

"My health improved the first two or three years. I lived a good deal out of doors. I hunted wild pigeons, wild geese and ducks in the spring, squirrels in the summer, prairie chickens in the fall, wild ducks when they visited the corn fields, and rabbits during the winter." A successful hunter, who was also a bee-keeper, got the pastor interested in bee-keeping. The parson thought of his congregation, and said he would go to keeping bees if he could get a hive that "would not swarm on the Sabbath." The expert taught the pastor so to divide the bees that there would be no occasion to swarm.

"It was a rather unusual thing in that staid old United Presbyterian congregation . . . for a preacher to do so many unministerial things—such as hunting, fishing, and bee-keeping—but my people endured it."

As a city preacher, Henry Wallace had always written out his sermons, two a week. At Morning Sun, he was formal in the mornings, but began to extemporize in the evenings. Then he was introduced through a colleague to the expository method. He adopted it.

"Briefly, it is this. Instead of taking a theme and developing it in a logical manner, or using it as a motto on which to hang a speech of your own, take a text or passage . . . study the context, put yourself as far as possible in the place of the author, and then unfold the thought, making it applicable as you go along to the conditions and circumstances of the people who hear you. This is practically the same method that I have followed for many years in the exposition of the Sabbath school lessons in WALLACES FARMER.

"While at Morning Sun, I endeavored to become acquainted with as many people and as many different kinds of people as possible. I avoided everything distinctly ministerial, and wore a business suit except when preaching or attending meetings of the Presbytery. . . . My habit of hunting and fishing gave me an opportunity of knowing everybody in the neighborhood who had any sport in him. . . ."

In April, 1877, on the advice of his physician, Henry Wallace sent his resignation to the Presbytery. He had decided to go to Winterset to look after his farms and to keep out-of-doors. His doctor forbade him to preach a farewell sermon. When he left Morning Sun he already had an interest in journalism, the new career in which he was to spend many active and strenuous years. He was to become editor of WALLACES FARMER from 1895 to 1916.

Harvest Festivals and Nebraska Churches

• Harvest festivals and "God's Acre" proceeds added materially to the 1954 contributions for many Nebraska congregations.

At Gordon, $2,600 was realized at the annual Lord's Acre sale of Clinton Methodist church. An apron brought $60; the tie of the pastor, the Rev. Otto Fabre, sold for $38 and was then returned to him; the bazaar auction, dinner and lunch netted $812. Cash donations and proceeds from the Lord's Acre sale added $1,800.

The joint God's Acre day observance held annually at Douglas for more than fifteen years resulted in contributions of more than 1,400 bushels of corn (current value about $1.50 per bushel) and $700 in cash. The observance is sponsored by the Methodist, Disciples and Roman Catholic churches.

Town & Country Church

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Contributors of articles to TOWN AND OUNTRY CHURCH speak for themselves and ot for the National Council of Churches sponsoring organizations.

Purposes of This Journal

The purposes of this Journal are:

A. To encourage cooperation among rural churches.

B. To improve the administration of the local church, this to include organization of the church, finance, religious education, community relationships, and the training of lay leadership.

C. To stimulate the development of a Christian philosophy of rural life, this to embrace ethical issues in agriculture, social reconstruction, and government programs; and the content of the minister's message.

Part of Larger Program

The Journal is an important part of an enlarged "cooperative rural church program" that will encourage a national "rural church movement."

The Kingdom of God in the South

ARTHUR C. CHURCHILL

• There can be no Kingdom of God in the southern states of our nation without the amelioration of the economic condition of rural as well as urban poor people. Such amelioration must be founded on a more equitable agricultural system, for the present system of agriculture in the South is based upon economic slavery. Farm workers are not allowed to leave their jobs in agriculture until they are free of debt which in many cases is never. Some do leave without a settlement, but the majority are tied to their jobs by economic bonds. The droughts of the past few years which have brought hardship and misery have intensified the problem.

In Cotton

An example of this situation is the case of the sharecropper who in 1952 made only eight bales of cotton. This was not enough to break even. The next year—with good management and "know-how" and in spite of the 1953 drought—he made twenty-six bales and was able to pay up all his debts and have something left over. His wife was able to buy new curtains for the windows and get some extra equipment for the kitchen. But in 1954 he was back where he was 1952, for the plantation owner, instead of allowing the sharecropper to use his knowledge, appointed a manager who required him to plow up much of his first crop of cotton (when it appeared that it might not be productive) and replant it. And this year the sharecropper has been able to get only nine bales of cotton, which will not make it possible for him to break even.

So this sharecropper said, "I am not going to make a fuss; I'm just going to move after my crop is in." And that is what many farm workers do. A great many move the first of the year, hoping for a better deal somewhere else. Some find it—some don't.

The Mid-South farm worker is chronically underemployed, chronically undernourished, ill clad and poorly housed. These are all conditions brought about by the system of agriculture under which he operates. The off seasons of the year—such as after his crop is in and before he starts to prepare his fields for planting, and the time between cotton chopping and cotton picking—have become longer and longer, and the work seasons have become smaller and smaller. This is due to weather, increased mechanization, and the bringing in of Mexican laborers, all of which have contributed to a shorter work year. And on top of all this, the government has reduced his acreage.

Diversification

The government acreage cuts have caused an exodus from the cotton plantations to urban areas and are bringing about diversification in farming. Farmers are planting more gardens and other crops, besides cotton.

A number of farmers I know have supplemented their income from cotton by raising a flock of chickens, keeping hogs, having a cow, and growing a garden. These four may be called the props of a new agriculture in the South. Diversification of this sort is taking your eggs out of one basket, so to speak, and putting them in a number of baskets. And when one prop fails, the rest are sufficent to still hold up the building. The genius of these four crops, if it may be called that, is that each one may be used to buttress the livelihood of the farmer with a chance for surplus to be traded or disposed of for cash income.

Some have tried other crops such as tomatoes, okra, strawberries and sweet potatoes as a cash crop, but without success. When the weather is favorable for these crops, which it has not been over the past few years, there is still the problem of the market. Farmers who had a good

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(*Continued from Page 5*)

crop could not dispose of it. All this may be chalked up to experience.

Agriculture and Industry

In order to provide the farmer with an income sufficient for his needs, there must be a BAWI program to take care of his periods of unemployment—*Balance Agriculture With Industry*. An example of what is being done along this line is to be found in southeast Missouri where seven counties have banded together to form an industrial association of businessmen and planters to bring in industry. A new plant may employ only fifty workers as in the case of one new industry brought in recently to a town in the South, but that one plant can take up the slack considerably. Two new industries would be even better. State governments in the South as well as Chambers of Commerce are awakening to their responsibilities in this regard, and it is not unusual to see advertisements run in issues of national magazines urging industries to consider Southern locations.

Changing the Pattern

One of the greatest problems in changing the age-old economic system of agriculture in the South is the apathy and indifference and ignorance of the farm worker. He is encrusted in an age-old layer of customs and patterns of doing things. It is hard to change, especially when he dosen't know whether the new will bring any different results. Farm workers need to have someone with them every minute to help them change their ways of doing things. It is not enough to tell them and show them. A group of small farmers who tried to raise tomatoes one year failed because they didn't spray for insects in time. By the time the mistake was caught it was too late.

In order to change the pattern, it is necessary either to have a smart foreman to supervise every procedure which is different from that of the past, or to know individual farmers personally and keep in touch with them and stay with them in their farming operations. That is not always easy to do. But we have found that where it can be done new ways become old ways, fixed ways. And as better practices become habits and good results are seen and observed by others, the new and better methods catch hold.

Cotton was once infectious, but now diversification and irrigation and other new practices are becoming infectious. And out of a scrambling kind of existence, a people and a region are gradually being brought under God's plan of control. Working with Him and working with people can truly bring about miracles. These latter-day miracles make the Kingdom of God no longer fantastic in the South.

Excuse It, Please!

(from correspondence)

Dear Editor:

It has been pointed out to me that I made a mistake in terminology in my review of Dargan Butt's book *Preach There Also,* when I called the "Mine of Pastoral Wisdom" a sub-title. Actually it is not part of the book at all but a sort of promotional blurb on the dust jacket. I am sorry—and I certainly wish to acknowledge that the mistake was mine.

—Philip Humason Steinmetz

Liberty Hyde Bailey

• "If the earth is holy, then the things that grow out of the earth are also holy. They do not belong to man to do with as he will." The lines are from *The Holy Earth* by the poet, philosopher, educator, scientist, and administrator, Liberty Hyde Bailey, who died December 26, 1954, at age 96, at Ithaca, N. Y. I suppose there never was a more versatile man, judging by the long list of his published books. In this tribute I choose to emphasize personal reminiscences.

The first thorough talk I heard Dr. Bailey give was at East Lansing in 1927. He had retired as dean of the New York College of Agriculture in 1913. Speaking at his alma mater, Michigan State College, he was in a mood to recall personal experiences. He said a word about the pioneer days in South Haven, Michigan, and told us that his father once said he expected his son to drive a team of horses for a living when he grew up.

The Schoolboy

Dr. Bailey's father came from Vermont, and was a carrier of fruit trees to the West. Dr. Bailey also told us that when he was a student at Michigan State, the boys would all have to stop at the President's house and ask permission to walk to the town. When mention was made of the books he had written, he said that he had also consigned a number of manuscripts to the flames. As I remember, there was no manuscript or copy of the address. He closed, as I recall, with beautiful words something like this: The alma mater does not care so much about how many books you have written or the money you have made. Rather, she asks what great harbors of vision have you created into which men may sail the ships of their dreams?

Years of Service

In 1908 Theodore Roosevelt asked him to come to the White House at 10:00 P.M. (as I recall it), and asked him to assume the chairmanship of the Commission on Country Life. T. R. had talked with Horace Plunkett, it seems, earlier. The Commission went about the country, and had its travel expenses paid from a grant of $5,000 which the Sage Foundation sent to Dr. Bailey in response to an appeal by mail. The report was prepared by Dr. Bailey. It had all sorts of indirect influence. It played a part in the creation of the federal extension service, and in the inauguration of early public health work in rural areas. It influenced home mission boards in undertaking the special rural services that are now well established.

Dr. Bailey was president of the American Country Life Association when it met at Cornell in 193[illegible]. Shortly thereafter I saw him earl[illegible]

ne morning at Grand Central Station, the day I arrived earlier than ny other morning. He had come own from Ithaca on the Lehigh Valley sleeper, and was off on a long rip in search of palms. He is said to ave traveled 250,000 miles and to ave collected more than 275,000 lants of all kinds. On his 91st birthay he was off to the West Indies for alms, and his friends at Cornell ad to postpone a birthday dinner lanned for him there.

His Gifts to Future Generations

I like best "The Background Books," which were originally published by him with the sub-theme, The Philosophy of the Holy Earth. One of these was *The Holy Earth,* which he wrote on the sea, while on long voyage. Another consisted of erse, *Wind and Weather.* There are ver 150 poems in the book. There s one on the country school:

There certainly will come a day
As men become simple and wise
When schools will put their books away
Till they train the hands and the eyes.

There was one on the country hurch:

In some great day
The country church
Will find its voice . . .
For I preach the worth
Of the native earth.

Liberty Hyde Bailey departed this arth an internationally renowned otanist, horticulturist, and agricultural educator. Many of his books were technical, but others, e.g. the works on gardening, were also used by amateurs. In a seminar on Theology and Rural Life, some of us included his writings, and the background books are still good for the rural churchman.

When Dr. Bailey was injured in New York some years ago, and taken to the hospital, a friend, Mark Rich, visited him, and Dr. Bailey said: 'I don't remember your name but I know that you are country minister, and that you are doing a great work."

With all his scientific attainment there was always something of the artistic and the poetic that sprang from him and enriched and inspired his friends and co-workers.

—Benson Y. Landis

Undertone

Liberty Hyde Bailey

From morning till night and everywhere
My days are full of their effort and care;
Full of labors to drive and schemes to test,
Of work to finish and knowledge to wrest;
And the known result of this noise and strife
Is what men and the world all call my life,—
This is the meed of the work that I own
Outspread on my life as an overtone.

But ever there runs through the work I own
The all-silent stream of an undertone.
This stream is myself as my life I live
And out of it flows all the strength I give.
It's the tone of hills and calm of the plain
The smell of the soil and the touch of rain;
'Tis a careful thought of the calm sweet grass
An abiding joy in the birds that pass
In the mite that lives in the growing shoot
And the changing tints of the leaf and fruit;
'Tis the melting snows and the morning sun
And the soft gray days and the marshes dun;
'Tis appeal of frost and the fragile dew
Of the passing clouds and the depths of blue;—
Then a quiet heart that can give no sign
Of the sacred calms that are only mine,
Or the gentle sins that are part of me
As the silent twigs are part of the tree,
Or memories deep I cannot express
Any more than the tree in its wild'rness.

The peace of the winds is my undertone—
I move with the crowd, but I live alone.

—Reprinted, with permission, from *My Great Oak Tree*

World Day of Prayer

• "Abide in Me" is the theme for the annual World Day of Prayer, which will be observed on Friday, February 25, 1955. Thousands of Christians in the United States and in 128 countries around the world will be united in prayer on that day, the first Friday in Lent. This is the 69th year of the observance in the United States.

The sponsor in the United States is the General Department of United Church Women of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

The purpose of the Day is to unite all Christians in a bond of prayer and to make an offering for Christian missions at home and abroad. Offerings are divided equally between the Divisions of Home Missions and of Foreign Missions of the National Council of Churches, which allocate the funds for interdenominational work.

The program for the World Day of Prayer comes from a different country each year. The service for 1955 has been prepared by Jorgelina Lozada, minister of a Disciples church in Buenos Aires, Argentina. It may be procured from the Department of Publication and Distribution, National Council of Churches, 120 East 23rd Street, New York 10, N. Y., for fifteen cents per copy.

An African Woman's Prayer

• Heavenly Parent, thou art our father; thou art also our mother. Like a father thou dost counsel us and guide us and protect us. Mother art thou to us for thou dost comfort us and feed us. We are like little children sitting around the dish of food which the mother has prepared. Each may stretch forth his hand and take a portion. And that satisfies. Thou dost feed us from the heavenly dish, thy Word, and the food is Jesus, thy Son, who is the Bread of Life. May we eat of him during this communion season. Make us true and ready to serve him. In his name. *Amen.*

—From
The Rural Church at Worship

In-Service Training at Wisconsin

• The fifth annual Interdenominational School for Town and Country Ministers will be held at the Rural Church Center, Green Lake, Wisconsin, April 14-29, 1955. This School, which is open to ministers and their wives from the cooperating denominations, is sponsored jointly by the Wisconsin Council of Churches and the Rural Church Center. It is designed to increase the minister's effectiveness in his work in town and country churches. All courses of study, projects and workshops are planned so as to be intensely practical and useful for the town and country pastor in his work.

A workshop course on "The Administration of Federated Churches and Interdenominational Parishes" will be a featured course this spring. Dr. Ralph L. Williamson, formerly director of Rural Church Institute at Ithaca, N. Y. and presently head of the rural program at Dakota Wesleyan University, Mitchell, S. D., will lead the course. An attempt will be made to work out procedures and methods, and it is expected that a handbook outlining approved principles will be issued as a result of this course. At the close of the week's study, the denominational officials of Wisconsin and surrounding states will be invited to meet with the students for a review and discussion of the workshop findings.

Dr. E. W. Mueller, secretary of the rural church program of the National Lutheran Council, will teach a major course on "The Church's Ministry to the Changing Community." The other major course, "Christian Education for the Rural Church," will be taught by Mrs. Mary Esther McWhirter, editor of educational materials for children for the American Friends Service Committee.

Workshop sessions will also be held on Women's Work, Handicrafts, and Church Music. In connection with the school, the third Interdenominational Town and Country Choir Festival and Clinic, which draws rural church choirs from all over Wisconsin, will be held.

The Bible course on "Rural Preaching Values in the Psalms and Minor Prophets" will be taught by the Rev. Robert T. Frerichs, Dean of Rural Church Center.

The Long House
Green Lake, Wisconsin

For full information regarding rates, scholarships and courses, write to the Wisconsin Council of Churches, Washington Building, Madison 3, Wisconsin. Many major denominations offer special scholarships covering all or most of the cost, and special scholarship funds are available to pastors and wives.

The Proof of the Pudding

C. A. PEPPER

• If "the proof of the pudding is in the eating," then the testimonies of the pastors and wives who have attended the schools for Town and Country Ministers at Rural Church Center, Green Lake, Wisconsin, during the past ten years should be conclusive evidence that the experiences at this inservice training center are very much worth while.

One wrote from an Iowa parsonage: "I felt the nearness of the Great Shepherd there at Green Lake and I have been helped and uplifted by the experience. I feel I can do better work as an under-shepherd on the local field." An Oregon pastor said: "We come back to our fields of labor with a new vision of the possibilities in helping to build a more Christian world." And one from Pennsylvania commented: "We found here overwhelming inspiration, but sobering challenge!"

Started under the leadership of Dr. Mark Rich, then Secretary of the Department of Town and Country Work of the American Baptist Home Mission Society, the first schools at Rural Church Center were held in the winter of 1945, each being four weeks in length. After the first experimental years, however, the same courses were condensed into sixteen days, so that pastors would not have to be away from their fields or their families for so long.

The schools are run after the folk-school pattern, with minimum of lectures and maximum of guided discussion and creative committee work. Major courses or workshops are conducted on such varied subjects as knowing the community, group dynamics, rural evangelism, recreation, planning a church program, and church music. Some of the most competent leaders in rural church life in America have led these discussions—Ralph Felton, Calvin Schnucker, Ralph Williamson, Mark Rich, and others of like calibre. Each day is started with a Bible study course. There is a craft shop where wood, leather and metal work may be learned. And the library is acknowledged to be one of the foremost collections of volumes on the rural church and rural life anywhere in the country.

The cooperative living arrangements have proven to be a valuable part of the teaching process. The sharing of theological convictions and ideas on church work during the after-meal dishwashing periods are perhaps even more valuable than some of the classes! The family-type of living, in which all share in work, study, prayer, and play, tends to bind the group together in a fellowship of Christian love transcending all barriers. Discouraged or puzzled pastors often make such comments as this: "I had been facing a number of problems, and there in the program and fellowship of the school I received much help."

Another value has been the frequent attendance of missionaries from various home mission fields—from Alaska, Puerto Rico, Nicaragua, and several American Indian fields. These contacts help to make missionary work come alive in the thinking of many rural pastors. Denominational leaders also come in for special lectures, or just to visit the school for a day to become acquainted with those attending.

Rural Church Center has gradually become the focus of interest in

he town and country church for American Baptists, and a center for developing rural church programs. A Pastors' Minimum Salary Plan was studied here, and has found wide acceptance. A program for settling Christian families on the land and the development of organizational structures suited to the small church are other matters which have been critically reviewed by the students. At the Interdenominational School, which is one of the four schools held each year, workshops have been held on Theology and Rural Life and on local church cooperation. The Wisconsin Council of Churches joins in sponsoring this session. A limited Extension Service radiating from the Center is being developed and it is expected that this will provide increasing help to local churches.

Rural Church Center is administered by an Advisory Board of nine members, representing the various agencies interested, with the Rev. Joseph Heartberg, Secretary of the Department of Town and Country of the American Baptist Home Missions Society, as the executive director, and the Rev. Robert Frerichs as business manager and dean of the schools. The experiences of these ten years, during which 655 students have registered from 36 states, seem to indicate that "the best is yet to be."

Rural Valley

I am a little river,
You are a mighty lake;
You cannot give me all you have,
While all I have you take.

I am a rural valley,
You are a city great;
You wear and waste the best I give,
I from the soil create.

You shine the nation's glory,
I do not shine at all;
You tell mankind's sad story,
Without me you would fall.

Heed then my homes and churches,
They teach strong men the truth;
It is my power that moves the world
And keeps all men in youth.

—George Frederick Wells
South Hero, Vermont

Ministers and Social Security

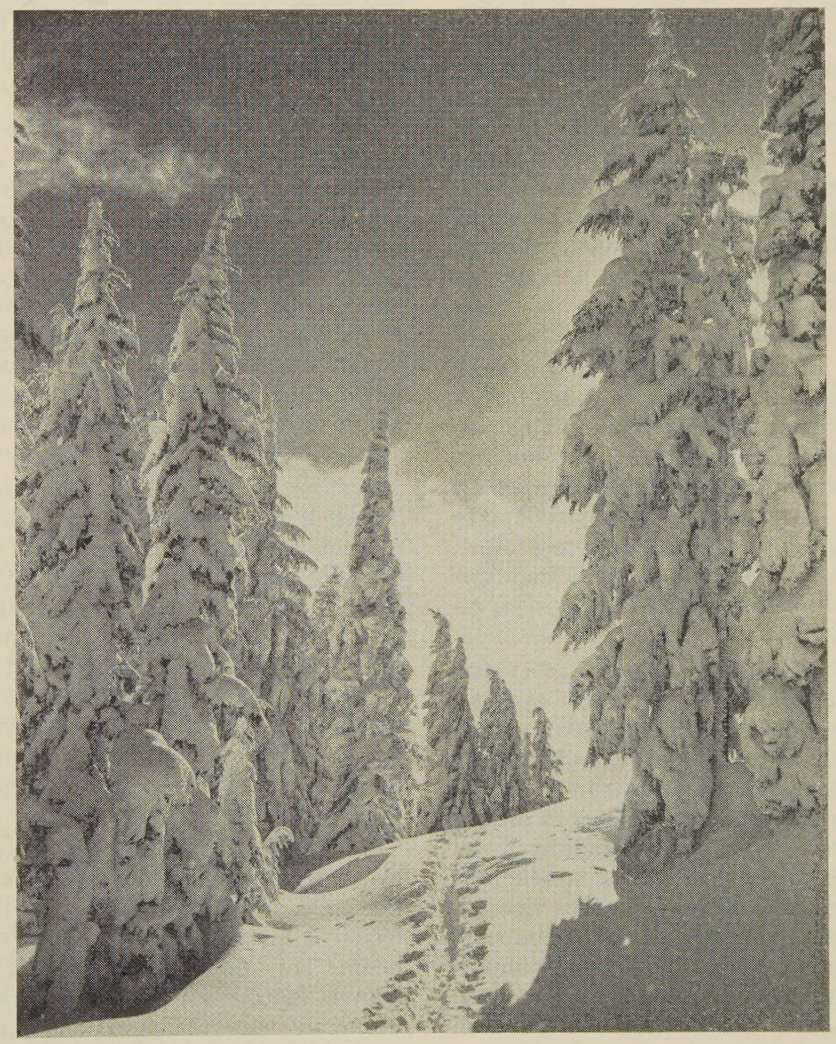
• As a result of the Social Security Amendments of 1954, the protection of Federal old-age and survivors insurance has now for the first time been made available to ministers of religion as such.

The coverage of ministers is to be on an individual basis, not involving participation by their churches or employing organizations. It is to be optional with the minister. For coverage purposes, employed ministers will be regarded as self-employed.

The new law permits a duly ordained, commissioned or licensed minister to secure social security coverage by filing a certificate with the Internal Revenue Service indicating his desire to be covered as a self-employed person.

A person now in the ministry has two years after January 1, 1955, in which to make his election. After those two years have passed, he will forfeit his opportunity to be included in the system at any time. Those who enter the ministry in the future will have two years after their entry in which to elect coverage. Once an election in favor of coverage is made it cannot be revoked.

The first action to be taken by any minister who wishes his 1955 earnings to be credited for social security is to file a certificate to that effect with the Internal Revenue Service before April 15, 1955. He must also have a social security account card by that date. The card, and full information about old-age and survivors insurance, may be obtained without cost at the nearest social security office.



A. Devaney, Inc., N. Y.

A Sampling of the Convocation Seminar Reports

• There were seventeen seminars at the Salina Convocation and the reports—mainly on local church methods and programs—will be published separately. Here follows a sort of a dip into the seventeen reports in order to extract a few highlights.

1. *The Farm, the Family and the Church*—The farm, the family and the church affect each other all the time. The church has a stake in this trinity that is greater than that of the school. Each of the trinity can contribute to building the good community. The church should constantly seek to interpret the meaning of "responsible Christian living."

2. *Churching the Wide Open Spaces*—The wide open spaces should be studied intensively by the churches. The emphasis should be on personal evangelism. The minister and the interested lay worker should be supplemented by instruction by mail and by a great deal of religious broadcasting. "Car pools" should be organized to improve attendance. The home mission boards should support needy parishes in these sections.

3. *Pastoral Counseling*—The business of the minister as a counselor of individuals is not to judge but to try to understand people. The pastor's first responsibility is to the person in need. The minister is a pastor, not an amateur psychiatrist. He should use all the resources available for understanding human nature and for improving his own effectiveness.

4. *The Role of Women in Professional Church Leadership*—Women have a definite contribution to make to the professional church leadership, just as they have in the local church. Some denominations ordain women as ministers, and in many there are opportunities in religious education, missions, and as deaconesses. Training for professional church leadership is of first importance. This should be of the best, and work "on the field" should be a part of the training.

5. *Evangelizing Rural People*—In evangelism in rural areas, the branch Sunday school is important, so is intensively pastoral work, and systematic lay activity. "Visitation evangelism" was given special attention. The churches need to see their responsibility for all the people. Greater use of radio and TV would help. More use should be made of visual aids in the church program.

6. *Training Ministers for Rural Churches*—In-service training institutes, or refresher courses, were strongly recommended. The rural minister also needs special training in the seminary. In addition to the traditional disciplines of a theological education, a rural minister needs courses in psychology, anthropology, group dynamics. It was noted with satisfaction that theological seminaries are giving some supervision to the field work of students.

7. *Churches Cooperating for an Effective Ministry*—Congregations in local communities should work more with one another, so that all needs are met, and the unchurched are reached. Some communities need larger units, and for those the larger parish and federated churches are possibilities. A great need is to make an enlarged and specialized ministry available.

8. *Laymen in the Rural Church*—There is need among laymen of a realization of their responsibility in carrying out their mission. Their duties include a lay ministry and home visitation. Training of young people is important. Laymen need to learn their own denominational history and programs. Church libraries should be developed. Much printed material available was said to be too difficult for the average layman.

9. *Public Relations for Rural Churches*—Good public relations is the creation of a favorable and effective impact of the church on the people of the community. The church should work with the press, cooperate with the agricultural extension service, take good care of the church building and have attractive signs and lighting. The minister should be related to the civic life of the community.

10. *The Rural Church and Church-Related College*—The church-related college has a responsibility toward the rural church, and the church has a responsibility toward the college. Probably both have missed opportunities to relate themselves to the rural community in an effective manner. The local church can help the college in the training of students in Christian living and in leadership projects.

11. *Radio and Television*—Radio and television offer the churches an unparalelled opportunity for telling their story and for creating a favorable opinion in which to fulfill their mission. Rural churches wishing to use these media must plan a program for a particular audience. Enlisting group participation helps. Try new ideas. Take plenty of time to plan. Churches should cooperate in use of radio.

12. *Audio-Visual Aids*—Audio-Visual aids should be a part of the local church program. To be effective, their use must be planned and they must be definitely related to the other parts of the program. It is well to get good technical advice about equipment and the type of equipment to buy, in order, as funds become available.

13. *The Parish Paper and Church Bulletin*—The parish paper should contain both information and instruction. Lay people should have responsibility for the parish paper. A workshop on methods of preparing a parish paper is usually helpful. It is recommended that a workshop on this be conducted at future convocations.

14. *Principles of Agricultural Policy*—After considering the history of farm programs, it was felt that public policy is based on value judgments. The kind of policy advocated will reflect our ideas as to the sort of economy we think we should have or the objectives that we feel are desirable. Programs should be consistent with other policies.

15. *Presidential Commission on Rural Life*—It was recommended

that the Department of the Town and Country Church study proper methods to request the President of the United States to establish another Commission on Country Life and that 1957 (fifty years after Theodore Roosevelt's Commission) be the main year of activity; and that contact be made with Roman Catholic and Jewish leaders.

16. *Theology and Rural Life*—There are implications of Christian theology which are particularly applicable to rural people. There is a great opportunity to emphasize stewardship in rural areas—stewardship of all of life. Churches have an obligation to help people understand the Christian vocation of the common life.

17. *Agricultural Surplus and the Church*—The purpose of agricultural production is to supply the needs and desires of God's children. It is morally imperative that we, as Christians, discover ways in which our surpluses may become men's supplies; our abundance may become their health; our plenty become their welfare.

Rural Life Sunday, 1955

• Rural Life Sunday will be observed in 1955 on the fifth Sunday after Easter, Rogation Sunday, May 15.

The Department of the Town and Country Church again makes available an order of service suitable for use by a congregation. The order of service for 1955 was prepared by the Rev. W. Francis Allison, Episcopal clergyman at Montrose, Pennsylvania.

In addition to the order of service containing responsive readings and suggested hymns, there is a paragraph on "How to Observe Rural Life Sunday" and data on the origin of the day.

Copies may be obtained after March 1 from your cooperating home missions board or from the Department of Town and Country Church, 257 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y., for 5 cents per copy or $1.50 per 100 copies.

The Future of American Cooperatives*

FRANK W. HUSSEY

• The most urgent need today is for the people of America to approach their national responsibilities in the spirit of cooperation, tolerance, sympathy and understanding. These, too, are the basic elements of our cooperatives. They are the foundation on which we build. They are the foundation on which true democracy will be achieved. Our cooperatives are enabling people to help themselves, and this is the essence of American democracy.

Ways to Increase Efficiency

There are three steps that we might list as important to increase efficiency in the productive operations or in service to our members:

First, better business management at every step of our several functions. There is increasing demand for services and supplies to members of our organizations that includes all the services that we perform.

Second, our marketing processes and distribution activities can be vastly improved so that there is less waste, loss of time, and loss of the producers' production. Research by our colleges and central government should be greatly expanded in our marketing programs and we must all see that adequate appropriations are secured to do the job.

Third, and perhaps most important of all, leadership of our cooperatives must be encouraged and men with vision found who are equal to our opportunities and needs.

One of the most dangerous attitudes which any human institution may have is to become self-satisfied or complacent. A study of the balance sheet of volume and margins and number of patrons can easily become misleading, because as cooperatives, we don't deal with figures only but with people and their needs.

There is no greater safeguard against Communism, statism, or monopoly than in the development of our cooperative institutions in which each patron has a vital stake. But democracy is the shield of the freeman, and there is no better way of expression than in our cooperative organizations. We must, then, use our cooperatives in building for the future in the protection of our interest. Otherwise, monopoly will thrive and ultimately destroy both democracy and freedom.

The Future

In planning for the future boldly, we can easily double and triple the size and improve the efficiency of our cooperatives during the next two decades if people who own and control our cooperatives are determined to take advantage of these opportunities and use this great economic tool, this cooperative principle, in safeguarding and preserving our free enterprise system.

In building for this great future, our greatest undeveloped resources are not in our mines, or in our oil wells, or in our farm lands, great as they may be. Our greatest undeveloped resource is in our people and their ability to work with each other for the improvement and betterment of society. Therein lies the need for inspired leadership, for dedication for the task, for selfless commitment.

For cooperation is not based on economics alone. It is political, and social and spiritual. It must begin at home in the hearts of men and from there we can build to a future such as mankind has never known.

As cooperators, we are playing with great stakes. The future is bidding us to come and do the job that needs to be done here at home, but we have a greater stake in the world. We will fulfill our mission if we approach these two-fold tasks with courage and confidence and sufficient spiritual understanding to measure up to the needs of the hour. This bold approach, this far view, this greater vision is required.

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* *From an address to the 19th Congress of the Cooperative League of U.S.A.*

European Credit Unions*

H. B. YATES

• One characteristic of all European credit unions is that they require security or co-makers. This general attitude is not different from that of the average American banker: that one should be able to prove that he does not need a loan in order to secure one. Raiffeisen insisted that only members of good character be accepted in the credit union and that character loans be made. The only character loans that I heard of being used in Europe were in the credit unions in Finland, organized among people working for the same industry or on the same payroll, and then loans were small. The development and extension of character credit is a contribution of the American credit union to the movement.

Goal of Equality

The principle of a person borrowing money to improve his position in the world is not so prevalent in Europe as in America. European borrowing seems to be more for necessity. Europeans are naturally more conservative than Americans. In Europe, due to the crowded conditions in all countries and the relics of the class system found in some, the social and economic status of an individual is much more fixed than it is in America. One Englishman said to me: "We do not believe in encouraging our poor people to go into debt." That statement raised two questions: Who are "we," and who are the "poor people"?

I think it is a true statement to say that most European governments are more social minded than that of the United States, and as a result, they do more for the lower classes. Someone has aptly said that: "We in America have sought our goal of equality for all, not by pulling everyone down to the same level, but by giving everyone an opportunity to rise."

Primarily for Farmers

Raiffeisen's credit unions were organized primarily for farmers and the European credit union today is still primarily for farmers. In countries where the credit needs of the farmers have been provided for by the government as in England and France, there is no credit union movement.

The credit unions in all countries visited, regardless of the name they operate under, are based on the Raiffeisen system except that they have discarded the character loan idea. In Holland, a credit union is called a credit cooperative or agricultural credit society; in Denmark, a village bank; in Sweden, a rural credit society; in Finland, a share bank or a credit society; and in Italy, a rural bank. The best development of credit unions is probably found in Finland, Germany and Holland. In all countries, they primarily serve the farmers, but in Finland and Holland, the middle and working classes in the cities are also included. In all countries these organizations have their own central banks which have charge of the supervision and examination.

In Holland, there are 1,320 agricultural credit societies—the total membership is 300,000 people. Finland, at the close of 1952, had 650 credit societies with a total membership of 1,000,000. About two-thirds of the cooperative dairies, farmers' cooperative stores and cooperative slaughter houses manage their financial business through the cooperative credit societies. Fifty-four per cent of all agricultural loans are made by the cooperative credit societies. Government funds for settling the displaced persons and for the reconstruction of North Finland were handled by the credit societies.

Savings banks are found in all countries which accept savings and make loans to the people in the cities on security. The consumers cooperatives have savings departments where the members deposit their savings and may borrow against them. These savings are used by the cooperatives in the development and expansion of the Consumer Cooperative Movement. The Consumer Cooperatives have established their own banks to handle the savings of the cooperative members and to take care of the surpluses of the cooperative societies.

** From an address before the 19th Congress of the Cooperative League of U.S.A.*

The Weekly Newspaper—A Re-Discovery

• I have been enjoying journeys through the pages of what has been known as the Country Weekly, now better called the local newspaper published in villages, towns and small cities. I am sending for sample copies, somewhat at random, and I shall from time to time interpret selected portions of their pages. I am starting in the East, but I am rapidly moving South and West.

Because its name attracted me, I sent for a copy of *The Public Spirit*, Hatboro, Pa., published in Eastern Montgomery County. My number says: "26 Pages—7,600 copies." Single copies are 10 cents, the price of most of the weeklies so far received. *The Public Spirit* was established in 1873. It is published in a center with over 5,800 people, according to Ayer's newspaper directory. It contains book reviews and a "curbstone quiz." In the latter, a number of residents discuss Willow Grove's traffic problem.

There are the usual correspondent's columns. In Newtown, the Friends of the Library realized $200 from "A Country Store" held in the Library building. St. Luke's Protestant Episcopal Church in the same town realized $400 from a bazaar. The Newtown Presbyterian Church received ten new members. Many church notices appear.

There are a number of good photographs of important plays at high school football games. There is also a football forecast, mentioning not Cornell or Notre Dame, but Souderton and Quakertown.

A group of communities were arranging a "mass rally" on the theme, "How can the United States strength-

en the United Nations?" The Junior Chamber of Commerce of Hatboro was collecting items for a white elephant sale, proceeds to go for playground equipment.

In the *Vermont Journal,* Windsor, Vermont, established precisely one hundred years before the Hatboro *Public Spirit,* I note on Page 1 a column by a writer under the pen name of "The Wizard of Mt. Ascutney." He deplores numerous for-sale signs in certain places, but notes that "good village homes in Windsor remain at a premium," and "for sale signs are few and far between."

The Windsor Masons were arranging a trip to Montreal for a special ceremonial, and the Windsor County Democrats were announcing a rally at Windsor (both items also on Page 1). The editorials expressed sound Republican doctrines.

The Hospital Donation Day was a "huge success." Large supplies of fruits, vegetables, canned goods, clothing were donated, and $500 in cash was received. There was to be a U.S.O. Drive, and a Windsor girl made a report of the meeting of the Greater Vermont Association in Montpelier. The main objective of the Association is to publicize the state of Vermont. The Garden Club enjoyed colored slides of scenes photographed by a member on a trip around the famed Gaspe peninsula in Quebec.

There are "Nature Notes," featuring poetry in my issue. A "Country Woman's column" tells about road building in days gone by, when a farmer and his team were among the builders.

The "Green Mountain Gardener" furnished me with practical reminders on fall care of an asparagus bed. Blue Cross and Blue Shield were conducting extensive enrollment campaigns.

—B.Y.L.

Convocation Report

• The full report of the 1954 Convocation on the Church in Town and Country may now be procured from your denominational executive on town and country church work.

The Country and God*

WILLIAM L. ROGERS

• Perhaps a more descriptive title of my talk would be, "Farming as an Aid to Religion," for it seems that a farmer or almost anyone who dwells in the country has a special advantage in understanding the Bible and many special and continued opportunities for knowing God and God's will for him.

Reminders in Nature

It is no accident that Henry Van Dyke, the famous author, included these words in the verses which we have just sung:

All thy works with joy surround thee. . . .
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
Flowery meadow, flashing sea,
Chanting bird and flowing fountain,
Call us to rejoice in thee.

These words grew out of one of the basic concepts of the Christian religion—that God created the heavens and the earth and that the majesty of God is manifest in his works.

Historical Background

This idea has its origin in the historical backgrounds of our faith among the Hebrew people. Many of the early religious leaders were herdsmen who led their flocks to pastures in the valleys and on the hillsides of a mountainous area. They lived close to nature, spending much of their time in the out-of-doors.

These were "country people"—farmers of a sort. Their descendants who wrote the Old Testament were likewise "country people" for the most part. As a result, the things of which they wrote, the language they used, their figures of speech and their illustrations are more or less common to farmers and dwellers in the country everywhere—and can therefore be most readily understood by such people.

All of us who have paused on the way to the barn on a clear, cold night to glance up at the millions of glittering stars have a special feeling for the words of the Psalmist, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork." Or we have shared that same feeling of awe as we have tramped over a hill and seen the first glowing promise of the rising sun.

Vision of Truth

When David wrote the beautiful twenty-third Psalm he declared his faith in God in the language of a herdsman . . . a farmer. "The Lord is my Shepherd"—think how difficult it is to give a full interpretation of this Psalm to a city-dweller or to one who has no knowledge of the country or of sheep!

I have often thought of this Psalm when struggling with our own little flock of sheep. Unfortunately my sheep do not know me very well and I must admit that they frequently seem to lack faith in my judgment. Frequently when I try to take them to a fresh pasture they have other ideas. They catch sight of a strip of green grass on the other side of the road and narrowly escape being hit by a car instead of going where I know there is good, safe pasture. Sometimes they become so unmanageable I have to leave them in the same close-cropped pasture where they will be only partially fed.

On these occasions I seem to hear the words of the oratorio, "All we, like sheep, have gone astray," and I think that it is because we do not have sufficient faith in our Master that we, too, seek our own "greener pastures" and oftentimes find ourselves frustrated or endangered as a result.

The New Testament, as well as the Old, contains many teachings, par-

(*Continued on Page 14*)

* *From an address at the Hillsdale, N. Y. Methodist Church.*

(*Continued from Page 13*)

ables and figures of speech taken from nature and out-of-door life. Although Jesus was a villager and a carpenter he spent much of the time during his years of teaching wandering through the countryside talking to farmers and others. It is only natural then that he spoke in terms familiar to farmers.

One of the best loved parables of Jesus is the story of the lost sheep, one which a farmer can understand at once. Probably all of you have had the experience of leaving your flock or your herd in the barn while you went to look for an animal that had strayed. Undoubtedly there were farmers in the group to which Jesus related the parable and he told it especially because he knew that they would be in a special position to understand God's concern for human strays who have wandered away from him.

First Things, First

In this modern day when so much emphasis is laid on material things, one of the parables which is most difficult to understand is the one from the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus again draws comparisons from nature:

Do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life? And why be anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O men of little faith?

Oftentimes I am reminded of this passage when I go out to feed my heifers. All of you who have fed livestock can picture the situation at once. As you bring the grain, the animals that are lying down stand up. In their eagerness they shift back and forth in their stanchions, rattling the chains. As you feed the first one the others in line peer at you anxiously as though afraid you are going to forget them. You lift a scoop of grain to feed the second one and in her eagerness she knocks it from your hand, spilling it out of reach. As you go on down the line some try to eat their neighbor's grain before starting their own. All are anxious.

Now the strange thing about this behavior of the heifers is that it is a daily occurrence. Each morning and each evening you carefully give each one the proper amount of grain and hay for her best growth, and she prospers accordingly. You would think that the heifers would come to know that each would get her share and would wait patiently for it. Instead, because of their anxiety, their eagerness, they actually hinder you and thus suffer further delay in being fed.

Cure for Anxiety

Sometimes when I get very annoyed over this situation I am reminded that although God may have made man only a little lower than the angels, it would also seem at times that he has created us only a little higher than the animals . . . that in many situations in life we behave little better than these hungry heifers.

I think that is a part, at least, of what Jesus meant in the words I have quoted from the Sermon on the Mount. As Christians we accept, at least on an intellectual basis, the fact that God cares for us, that he will provide for our fundamental needs. Yet on a practical level, we have so many anxieties that they reveal our essential lack of trust in God. We worry about the weather, about our jobs, the hay crop, the harvest, the price of milk and the price of beef . . . all the things that may make a difference between prosperity and a sterner way of life.

Jesus said, "Do not be anxious about tomorrow." He asks us to put first things first: "Seek ye first the kingdom and his righteousness and all these things shall be yours as well."

This teaching implies what psychologists know to be true—a fundamental trust in God's loving care is the best cure for anxiety. It is true that you have to be a step or two above the level of a heifer to put it into practice, but it's possible!

Appreciation

With scenes of great natural beauty around us we must open our eyes that they may speak to us of the majesty and glory of our Creator. Living in a setting which makes the language of the Bible especially clear to us, we have an obligation to know the Bible better. Since in our daily life we frequently see the very same events to which Jesus referred in his teachings we need to let these events impress upon us the lessons Jesus taught. Surely, then, if we open our minds and hearts as well as our eyes, farming can be a genuine aid to our own personal religion!

Let us then with sincere thanks to God in our hearts sing that great hymn of appreciation:

For the beauty of the earth,
For the glory of the skies,
For the love which from our birth
Over and around us lies:
Lord of all, to thee we raise
This our hymn of grateful praise.

The Night

By William Blake

(Excerpt)

The sun descending in the west
The evening star does shine;
The birds are silent in their nest,
And I must seek for mine.
The moon, like a flower,
In heaven's high bower
With silent delight
Sits and smiles on the night.
Farewell, green fields and happy groves,
Where flocks have took delight.
Where lambs have nibbled, silent moves
The feet of angels bright;
Unseen they pour blessing
And joy without ceasing,
On each bud and blossom,
An each sleeping bosom.

BOOK REVIEWS

Highways to Faith. By David Wesley Soper. Westminster Press, Philadelphia. 1954. $2.75.

This volume has value for ministers and laymen alike, although the author designates it "a layman's book." From the standpoint of a minister in a local church, working with laymen, I find many valuable aspects of this book.

I like to draw upon the experiences of others as illustrations of how people have grown spiritually, and this book has thirteen examples of people who have found their "highways to faith." The old-fashioned testimony may have gone out of style but there is definite help in reading of experiences, as told by the persons themselves.

Our churches are under criticism for having too many "extra sessions," but if there is value in having laymen meet together in small groups and our so-called "extra sessions" can produce men like the examples given in this book, then we are not wrong in spending our time as we do. Prayer is a very important part in the lives of these persons—through prayer and fellowship with other Christians, they grew in stature.

And so may we grow in spiritual stature as we read the records of these men, whose vocations present an interesting cross section of occupations.

—Austin H. Armitstead

Wanderings in the Woodland. By Arthur Sheridan Westneat. Vantage Press, New York. 1954. $2.00.

Wanderings in the Woodland is a collection of sixteen nature lyrics. The author, a Baptist minister of Bayonne, N. J., has attempted to revive the pleasant days of summer vacations when he wandered in the woodlands and enjoyed "the majesty and quietness of nature." Each poem is prefaced by an essay which sets the tone for the verses which follow.

The lessons or messages which come from the forest depths are related in lines like the following:

I love to wander 'mid these scenes,
And tramp the winding ribbon roads;
The chipmunk's light and sprightly hops,
Show me how futile are my loads.

Or this from "To a Bullfrog":

I'll thankful be for what I am,
And push my growls away;
E'en though I live in puddle small
I'll be my best each day.

Born in Melbourne, Australia, Dr. Westneat came to the United States in 1903, and was ordained in the Baptist ministry in 1912. He has held pastorates in Kentucky, New Hampshire, and New Jersey. He has written many religious articles and hymns. His Thanksgiving hymn, "We Come with Hearts O'erflowing," has gained considerable popularity in congregations throughout the country.

—R. B. R.

Rural Christian Teaching Mission

• A pilot project to study how the National Christian Teaching Mission may be used by town and country communities was launched in the Romulus, Canoga, Fayette, N. Y. area, November 10-18, 1954, under the direction of Dr. Paul Sturges of the National Council of Churches and the cooperation of the Rev. Stanley Skinner, Director of the Rural Church Institute of the New York State Council of Churches in Ithaca, N. Y.

The National Christian Teaching Mission is a program by the churches to make each person in the community responsible for some church—to enlist the fellowship of each group to reach the unchurched and guide persons to a vital Christian commitment, and to assist the church in enlarging its program and leadership to meet its newly discovered opportunities.

Five churches cooperated in this project: the Romulus and Canoga Presbyterian, the Fayette and Varick Methodist, and the Fayette Federated (Lutheran and Evangelical and Reformed).

The program has four phases, each taking place in a local church. Meanwhile the pastors and guest leaders met each day for seminars under Dr. Sturges.

The first phase is a self-study by the representatives of each fellowship, study, and service group of the church to evaluate their program with special emphasis on the evangelistic possibilities of their fellowship.

Second, laymen of the churches take a complete religious census of the area served by these churches to discover the church affiliation or preference of every person in the community.

Third, a fellowship cultivation program is developed in each church, whereby members of the groups assume responsibility for cultivating each person by friendly visitation, inviting people to their group and church, guiding them to a Christian commitment, and enlisting them in some form of service.

Fourth, at a family night supper the guest leader surveys the new opportunities in view of the church's present program and gives guidance in enlarging the church program and leadership as a means of enlisting and challenging new people.

This Mission has been carried on by the National Council of Churches in 250 cities of over 10,000 population in the last seven years. However, this project is the first National Christian Teaching Mission to be undertaken in a rural section.

It is expected that this program will result in a long-term effort by the people of the local church to carry out the projects through visitation and program enlargement.

Tentative plans are under way to put on a National Christian Teaching Mission in the Otselic Valley around Cincinnatus and South Otselic, N. Y. sometime in the spring of 1955.

—Charles W. Ackley
South Otselic, N. Y.

Moving?

• Please notify Town and Country Church of your change of address.

Danebod Folk School

• Danebod Folk School, Tyler, Minnesota, seeks to serve as a center for rural culture and education, creative folk living, recreational leadership, and community development. Facing the fact that too many of our young people in rural areas are leaving the land for the lure of the big city, Danebod aims to stress the value of rural living, to develop pride in farming, and to foster in rural people a love for their land, their communities and homes, their country, and their God.

The Folk School Tradition

The spiritual father of the folk school movement is N. F. S. Grundtvig (1783-1872), sometimes called "the prophet of the north." This Danish poet, preacher, historian, and patriot believed that "every Dane should be an enlightened, useful citizen."

In contrast to the pietistic attitude that life here is merely a preparation for eternity, Grundtvig believed that man's entire earthly life was a God-given gift with a value in itself. Grundtvig fought for a school where learning, development, and enlightenment were their own rewards.

As Rousseau objected to treating childhood merely as a training period for youth, Grundtvig held that the period of youth was valuable in itself. Hence, he sought for the young a school with emphasis on individual, harmonious development and enrichment of life.

The folk schools of Denmark were not vocational. Their aim was not to train farmers and clerks and mechanics. Their main object was to lay a foundation for a fuller and richer life. But Grundtvig believed that when a pupil was awakened to a conscious realization of his own worth and potentialities as an individual he would also become a better farmer, or clerk, or mechanic.

There were in the folk schools no academic entrance requirements, no examinations or grades, no diploma, and no degrees. Grundtvig believed with Kristen Kold, his contemporary colleague in democratic education, that the school was to teach its pupils "to love God, their neighbor, and their country."

Danebod History

Danebod Folk School was built in 1888 by Danish immigrants under the leadership of the Rev. H. J. Pedersen, the founder of Ashland Folk School at Grant, Michigan.

The school followed the traditional pattern of the Danish folk schools with a three-month session each winter for men and a summer session for girls. Enlarged in 1904, the school accommodated about sixty students, and for many years it was filled to capacity. In 1917, the wooden structure burned but the following year a new, substantial brick building was constructed. In addition to the main building. Danebod owns the old Stone Hall (1888) which was the original community meeting place, a large gym hall (1904), a small cottage, and a barn which was H. J. Pedersen's first residence.

Since most of the students were from Denmark, the language was of course exclusively Danish. Following World War I and the resultant decrease in immigration, the enrollment gradually diminished and by 1931 the school was closed.

In the fall of 1945, group meetings were held throughout the community and it was decided to restore Danebod again. A financial campaign brought in more than $6,500. Through the following winter and spring skilled workers and volunteers repaired the building. By spring, 1946, Danebod was again in use.

Courses

Danebod Folk School is a direct descendent of the folk schools of Denmark and wishes to preserve the best in the folk school tradition. However, because different circumstances demand a different approach, a three-month course has been found infeasible, and the School now sponsors only shorter courses.

Danebod Folk School offers courses in cultural and cooperative living, not only for young people, but for all age groups. There are no entrance requirements. The courses are open to all regardless of creed or color. There are no grades, no credits, and no diplomas. There are courses in recreation, folk dancing, games, singing, literature, art, history, crafts, anything which will enrich the life of the individual participant, and the community from which he comes.

In addition to classes, the buildings are used as a center for many community activities. Danebod is open to any organization whose aims and purposes are in harmony with the folk school program.

Program for 1955

April 12-17: Women's Retreat
July 17-23: Recreation Institute
August 14-28: American Friends Service Committee—Family Camp
October 4-9: Danish Folk School meeting

New Insights for Christian Education

• The February 1955 *International Journal of Religious Education* is a special issue which takes a look at the future of Christian education in the local church and community.

At the request of concerned lay workers, the members of the editorial board of the *Journal* have delved into their wide experience with many churches and communities to bring forth an important evaluation of new trends and experiments in Christian teaching. Each article is the result of the group-thinking of all the members over a period of many months.

The issue is far-seeing, yet practical for lay workers in local churches, pastors, directors, administrative officers, boards of Christian education, teachers in training schools and workshops, students, and denominational and inter-church leaders. It will not only help them see what is new and promising, but will help them to evaluate present teaching programs.

Copies may be obtained from the *International Journal* office, 79 East Adams Street, Chicago 3, Illinois. Single copy, 35 cents; 6-19 copies at 25 cents each; 20 or more copies at 20 cents each.